

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ADDIS 08629 241623Z

67

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 EB-11 DRC-01 /120 W

----- 105750

R 241447Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0213

INFO AMCONGEN ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 8629

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, ET

SUBJECT: A MINISKETCH OF THE ETHIOPIAN REBELLION TO DATE

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION. SOME DAY AN ABSORBING BOOK CAN BE WRITTEN ON THE UNIQUE REBELLION WHICH BEGAN IN ETHIOPIA IN EARLY 1974. MUCH INFORMATION CAN BE GLEANED BY THEN WHICH AT PRESENT IS NOT AVAILABLE TO ANY SINGLE POTENTIAL AUTHOR. A REASONABLE OUTLINE FOR THE EARLY CHAPTERS WHICH IS BASED ON WELL ESTABLISHED FACTS, CAN ALREADY BE SKETCHED, HOWEVER.

CHAPTER 2: PROLOGUE. HERE THE AUTHOR MUST BRIEFLY REVIEW THE HISTORY OF ETHIOPIA, PRIMARILY IN THE REIGN OF HAILE SELASSIE I. A SEA CHANGE OCCURRED MIDWAY IN HIS REIGN. BEFORE THEN, "DEVELOPMENT " WAS AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE WORD IN THE THIRD WORLD, AND THE EMPEROR INITIATED ALL PROGRESSIVE INNOVATIONS IN ETHIOPIA. THEREAFTER, "DEVELOPMENT" HAD BECOME A HOLY GRAIL FOR EDUCATED ELITES EVERYWHERE, AND THE AGING EMPEROR WAS NO LONGER SEEN AS LEADING HIS PEOPLE INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. THE DISCONTENT OF THE EDUCATED BUILT RAPIDLY IN THE 50'S AND THE ABORTIVE COUP OF 1960 DRAMATICALLY ILLUSTRATED THE FACT. DURING THE FOLLOWING DECADE THE NUMBER OF EDUCATED, AND THE CONSEQUENT DISCONTENT, CONTINUED TO GROW. THE TYPICAL EVILS OF CORRUPTION, NEPOTISM, AND FLAGRANT MALADMINISTRATION WERE PRESENT TO AROUSE RESENT-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ADDIS 08629 241623Z

MENT, BUT MORE SIGNIFICANT WAS THE GALLING CONVICTION OF THE

RECENTLY EDUCATED ELITE THAT ETHIOPIA WAS STAGNATING WHILE THE REST OF THE WORLD WAS RAPIDLY DEVELOPING. ETHIOPIA MANIFESTED THE CLASSIC SYMPTOMS OF A COUNTRY ON THE BRINK OF REBELLION OR REVOLUTION, WITH LITTLE MORE THAN THE FORMIDABLE IMPERIAL INSTITUTION AS A COUNTERBALANCE. IN 1973 THE COMBUSTIBILITY OF THE POLITICAL MALAISE INCREASED STILL MORE AS A RESULT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MISHANDLING OF THE DROUGHT AND THE PAINFUL EXPERIENCE WITH RAPID INFLATION OF URBAN GROUPS PARTICULARLY. THE POWDER NOW AWAITED THE SPARK.

CHAPTER 3: THE EXPLOSION. HISTORIANS ARE LIKELY TO RULE THAT AN EXPLOSION WAS INEVITABLE AT ABOUT THIS TIME. THE SPARK, HOWEVER, WAS ACCIDENTAL. THERE WASN'T ENOUGH WATER AT THE BLEAK MILITARY OUTPOST IN NEGELLE, AND THE OFFICERS REFUSED TO SHARE THEIR ABUNDANCE WITH THE ENLISTED MEN. THUS MUTINY. NUMEROUS JUNIORS OFFICERS AND NONCOMS WHO HAD DISCUSSED WITH EACH OTHER DRASTIC CHANGES THEY WANTED IN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, AND EVEN PERHAPS IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, WATCHED THE DISTANT DRAMA INTENTLY. THE NEGELLE MUTINY PROVED STUNNINGLY SUCCESSFUL, ITS OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED AND NO REBELS PUNISHED. THAT WAS UNPRECEDENTED AND SENSATIONAL. THANKS TO THE NONCOM-OPERATED MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, THE WORD SPREAD LIKE WOLDFIRE. REFORMISTS IN OTHER MILITARY UNITS DECIDED THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE SIMILAR SUCCESS, AND THEY GAVE IT A TRY WITH VARIOUS TYPES OF DEMANDS. SUCCESS WAS NOT IMMEDIATE EVERYWHERE, BUT THERE WERE NO REPRISALS. WITH SOME INTER-CONNECTING PLANNING AND ORGANIZING, BUT MOSTLY BECAUSE OF THE BANDWAGON SYNDROME, POLICE, TACI DRIVERS, BUS DRIVERS, STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND EMPLOYEE GROUPS FOLLOWED WITH THEIR OWN STRIKES, DEMANDS AND DEMONSTRATIONS. WITH THE ARMED FORCES AND THE POLICE TOTALLY UNRELIABLE, THE AKLILU GOVERNMENT WAS HELPLESS. AFTER SEVERAL DAYS WHEN THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY IN ADDIS, THE CABINET HAD TO RESIGN.

CHAPTER R: THE STANDOFF. THE EMPEROR, BELIEVING THAT ENDELKACHEW WAS ONE OF THE VERY FEW MEN HE COULD MANIPULATE WHOM THE MILITARY REBELS WOULD ACCEPT, PROMPTLY ANNOUNCED HIM AS THE NEW PRIME MINISTER. THE MILITARY REBELS GENERALLY DISTRUSTED ENDELKACHEW, HOWEVER, AND THEY GRUDGINGLY TOLERATED HIM ONLY BECAUSE THEY WERE UNWILLING AT THIS POINT TO DEFEY

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ADDIS 08629 241623Z

THE EMPEROR OPENLY ON THIS CRUCIAL ISSUE AND POSSIBLY PLUNGE THE COUNTRY INTO FURTHER CHAOS. ALMOST ALL THE INTEREST GROUPS IN THE COUNTRY EXCEPT THE FORMER PRIVILEGED CLASSES WANTED SIGNIFICANT CHANGE RAPIDLY, BUT ENDELKACHEW TYPIFIED THE ANCIEN REGIME IN THEIR EYES. TUS HIS PREMIER-SHIP WAS ANOMALOUS AND CLEARLY A POOR RISK FROM THE OUTSET. IN THE FIRST WEEKS THERE WERE TREMENDOUS PRESSURES FROM ALL SIDES FOR IMMEDIATE REFORM, BUT ENDELKACHEW MANAGED TO WIN

A LITTLE TIME ON THE GROUND THAT EVERYTHING COULD NOT BE DONE OVERNIGHT, AND BY PROMISES TO MEET MAJOR DEMANDS. MEANWHILE ALL THE FORMER CABINET MINISTERS WERE ARRESTED EXCEPT THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND ENDELKACHEW HIMSELF, SO THE ANOMALY BECAME MORE BLATANT THAN EVER. ENDELKACHEW UNDOUBTEDLY MADE EFFORTS IN THESE AND SUBSEQUENT WEEKS TO PLACATE THE MILITARY AND OTHER REFORMISTS, BUT THE COURSE OF EVENTS LOOKED INCREASINGLY TO THEIR SUSPICIOUS EYES LIKE AN ATTEMPT TO DAM THE FLOW OF CHANGE, OR EVEN TO REVERT GRADUALLY TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE. HENCE A NEW BUILDUP OF FRUSTRATION, WHICH COULD BURST ITS BONDS AFTER THE ATTEMPT TO RELEASE SOME OF THE ARRESTED OFFICIALS AND THE REFUSAL TO PAY OFF ETHIOPIAN VETERANS OF THE UN'S CONGO INTERVENTION.

CHAPTER 5: THE REMOVAL OF POTENTIAL RESISTANCE. AT THE END OF JUNE THE ANGERED MILITARY REFORMISTS SEIZED TEMPORARY CONTROL OF RADIO STATIONS AND BEGAN A SERIES OF ARRESTS OF THOSE THEY THOUGHT WERE TRYING TO OBSTRUCT THE COURSE OF REFORM OR WERE PARTICULARLY FLAGRANT ABUSERS OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE. IN SHORT ORDER MOST OF THE FORMERLY POWERFUL WHO MIGHT HAVE BLOCKED THEM, OR EVEN COUNTER-ATTACKED, WERE NEUTRALIZED. THEN THE MILITARY STEPPED SOMEWHAT MORE TO THE FORE, MAKING PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPENLY INSTRUCTING THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY. THEIR ORGANIZATION HAD IMPROVED BY NOW AND ONE HEARD CONSTANTLY OF THE ARMED FORCES COORDINATING COMMITTEE, BUT THERE WAS STILL NO SINGLE MAN OR COUPLE OF MEN WHO DIRECTED THEM. AUTHORITY AMONG THEM WAS STILL DIFFUSE AND RATHER FLUID. THE ENDELKACHEW CABINET WAS NOW ALMOST POWERLESS, CLEARLY LACKING THE CONFIDENCE OF THE MILITARY POWER CENTER AND WITH ITS MINISTRIES DEMORALIZED FROM TOP TO BOTTOM BY FEAR AND INSUBORDINATION. LITTLE WAS BEING DONE AT A TIME WHEN THE MILITARY AND POPULAR DEMAND WAS FOR RAPID AND FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. THIS COULD NOT GO ON. THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ADDIS 08629 241623Z

MILITARY REFORMERS, STILL UNWILLING TO ASSUME DIRECT GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY, DEBATED AT LENGTH WHAT TO DO. FINALLY THEY FORCED ENDELKACHEW OUT.

CHAPTER 6 : THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMATION? THIS CHAPTER OPENED WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF LIJ MICHAEL IMRU AS PRIME MINISTER. IT WILL PROBABLY SEE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A NEW CONSTITUTION AND THE FIRST STEPS TO IMPLEMENT IT. SUITABLY CIRCUMSPECT SPECULATION REGARDING OTHER CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTER MAY BE FOUND IN ADDIS 8579.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION. THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK. PERHAPS THE MOST INTERESTING QUESTION TO BE RESOLVED IS WHETHER IT SHOULD EVENTUALLY BE ENTITLED "THE GREAT ETHIOPIAN REBELLION", OR "THE ETHIOPIAN

REVOLUTION". A WIDE VARIETY OF "ENDINGS" STILL APPEAR
POSSIBLE AT PRESENT, BUT THERE WILL BE NO RETURN TO CHAPTER 2.
WYMAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, GOVERNMENT REFORM, PRIME MINISTER, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS, ARRESTS, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: kelleyw0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ADDIS08629
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740200-0970
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740723/aaaaatoc.tel
Line Count: 172
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: RMISTS, BUT THE COURSE OF EVENTS LOO, KED INCREASINGLY TO
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 AUG 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2003 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: A MINISKETCH OF THEETHIOPIAN REBELLION TO DATE CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION. SOME DAY AN ABSORBING BOOK CAN
TAGS: PINS, PINT, ET, (ENDELKATCHEW MAKONNEN), (IMRU, MICHAEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005